

Just last year the House took a step forward by passing the VA Accountability Act of 2015, H.R. 1994, legislation that I cosponsored that would make important reforms to the VA system, which will provide the necessary resources and the flexibility the VA needs to hold poor-performing employees accountable.

While I believe that the VA has 99 percent of employees generally caring about the work they do and want to help veterans, we must always ensure that the other 1 percent of those who are not acting in the best interest of veterans are held accountable. Our veterans deserve only the highest quality of care at our VA facilities.

Fighting for our veterans who fought for us always has been and will always be one of my top priorities. I will continue my work in Congress to improve our veterans' quality of care in any way that I can.

RECOGNIZING KEY WEST FIRE DEPARTMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CURBELO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Key West Fire Department on their Class 1 Insurance Service Office rating, the highest achievable rating that a fire department can attain.

They are 1 out of fewer than 200 departments in the Nation to receive this score, which is based off of a multitude of factors, including training, response time, and how well they are equipped.

This rating also helps by providing residents with the lowest fire insurance rates possible, something I am sure that all Key West residents appreciate.

I commend Fire Chief David Fraga and the entire Key West Fire Department on their diligent work and their devotion to keeping everyone in Key West safe. We are very fortunate to have a strong team of firefighters protecting us.

RECOGNIZING FLORIDA KEYS MARATHON AIRPORT

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Florida Keys Marathon Airport for officially becoming an international airport on April 20, 2016.

For 8 years the staff has worked to attain this clarification. It comes as no surprise to me that they were able to achieve this feat. I commend the Florida Keys Marathon Airport on receiving this well-deserved designation. This airport will provide additional travel options for the families living in our community and the millions of tourists who visit south Florida every year.

Congratulations to Mayor Senmartin, Vice Mayor Kelly, council members Zieg, Coldiron, and Bartus, and city manager Chuck Lindsey and, also, former Mayor Ramsey and former city manager Mike Puto, all who worked very hard to make this a reality.

RECOGNIZING OFFICER MARIO GUTIERREZ

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Miami-Dade Police Department's own Officer Mario Gutierrez, who received the Medal of Valor, the highest decoration of honor given to public safety officers in the United States.

In 2013, Officer Gutierrez was on a routine call when he noticed an individual exhibiting strange behavior at a gas station near Miami International Airport. As Officer Gutierrez approached, the man attempted to light a gas pump on fire. In an attempt to disarm the assailant, who was holding a knife, Gutierrez received several stab wounds that nearly cost him his life.

Had the assailant been successful in causing a mass fire, many lives may have been lost on that day. Officer Gutierrez went above and beyond the call of duty to protect the members of our community. We thank him for his service, his selflessness, and his bravery in the face of danger.

Officer Gutierrez, thank you. You are a true hero.

RECOGNIZING MR. BRIAN REEDY

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Brian Reedy, a seventh grade visual arts teacher from Zelda Glazer Middle School in my south Florida congressional district.

In 2014, Mr. Reedy became the visual arts instructor at Zelda Glazer and, in only 2 years, has propelled the program to national recognition. Mr. Reedy has received numerous accolades for his work at Zelda Glazer, with his fellow teachers referring to the work of his students as magnet quality. His classroom, however, does not require an application to enter like many art magnet programs in south Florida. Any student can register.

Students have had their art pieces showcased from local shows in Miami all the way to the New York Scholastic Art Awards. What is even more impressive is that Mr. Reedy works with a wide range of talents, including those just getting started to people who have been painting for many years.

As a former Miami-Dade County School Board member, I always appreciate and support teachers who encourage our youth to explore their passions in life, and Mr. Reedy does just that. It is an honor to recognize Mr. Reedy for his great work at Zelda Glazer. I look forward to both his and his students' future successes.

HONORING NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah (Mr. STEWART) for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEWART. Mr. Speaker, along with many of my colleagues, I rise today to honor National Police Week.

One of the favorite things that I get to do as a Member of Congress is to ride with police officers as they go about their duties, and from St. George

to Salt Lake City I have had the opportunity to do this.

Sadly, many in our society, particularly among the press, have become highly critical of law enforcement officers. Now, I recognize that not all law enforcement officers are perfect. People make mistakes. We all do. But we can't let the mistakes of a few tarnish the name of such a noble and a brave profession.

Such criticism of police efforts doesn't come without a cost. It forces the officers to pull back, to become overly cautious, and to view every encounter that they may have through the prism of a lens of a media event.

What is the result of this? We now know that crime rates have been rising across the country. Interestingly and sadly, they are rising in some of the poorest communities, the communities that most need the help of an effective police force.

Now more than ever we need brave men and women who are willing to serve and to protect. As I have said, I have had the chance to go on several ride-alongs with several police departments. Again and again I have been impressed with their hard work, their professionalism, and their willingness to put themselves at risk to protect other people.

There is a great example of this. I am reminded of the heroic actions of Officer Hone, a police officer who in the last year saved two young girls in Salt Lake City. A disturbed man who had recently been released from prison and was on drugs broke into the home of two sisters, both of them college students. He began to viciously attack them. He took a knife and attempted to take their lives.

Fortunately, Officer Hone was in the area, heard the screams of these young girls, and just seconds before the intruder expected to take the life of one of them, this heroic officer quickly diffused the situation, literally saving her life.

Bree, the sister who was saved, said of this officer, "He was so professional and calm. Right when we made eye contact, I knew I was safe. It's a miracle that he had so much composure. He was our angel."

This is just one example of the thousands of courageous police officers we have in America. I am proud to live in a country where professionals are ready to put their lives at risk in order to serve and to protect members of their community.

Let us honor these police officers, their courage, their selflessness, and their dedication. Let us honor them not just this week, but, frankly, all year round for the sacrifices they make for us.

HONORING SALLY CLARK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) for 5 minutes.